



## CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

### CITY PLANNING BOARD

ROOM 304, WATERTOWN CITY HALL  
245 WASHINGTON STREET  
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380  
(315) 785-7740

MEETING: February 2, 2016

**PRESENT:**

Larry Coburn, Chairperson  
Michelle Capone  
Linda Fields  
Neil Katzman  
Anthony Neddo  
Steve Rowell

**ALSO:**

Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community  
Development Coordinator  
Michael A. Lumbis, Planner  
Jeffrey Polkowski, Planner  
Geoffrey Urda, Planner  
Matthew Owen, GIS Coordinator

**ABSENT:**

None

The February 2, 2016 Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Planning Board Chair Larry Coburn. Mr. Coburn called for a reading of the Minutes from the January 5, 2016 Planning Board Meeting. Ms. Fields made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neddo and all voted in favor.

### **ZONING MAP ADOPTION – ADOPTION OF A NEW OFFICIAL “ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK”**

The Planning Board then considered the adoption of a new official “Zoning Map of the City of Watertown, New York,” that reflects changes to various zoning districts made to accommodate a new GIS-based parcel map and changes made to address various split-zone parcels throughout the City.

Mr. Mix began by saying that the goal of this was to bring the zoning map into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He noted that the current official zoning map is Mylar, which is a plastic sheet with rub-on symbols. Mr. Mix then said that, practically speaking, the City has been using GIS for some time now as an unofficial zoning map. He added that the City’s GIS Department had imported the Tax Assessment Maps from AutoCAD into GIS, which shifted many of the lines, and required several subsequent adjustments to make the different layers fit together.

Mr. Mix then noted that there was split zoning on many parcels within the City, resulting in parcels that were in two zoning districts. Mr. Mix said that a year earlier, Staff had suggested to the Planning Board and to City Council that the City make some adjustments. He said that City Council agreed with the suggestion, with the caveat that the Council did not want any controversy over proposed changes.

Mr. Mix said that Staff was primarily treating this proposed change as housekeeping. He said that Staff had examined all of the parcels in the City that had split zoning and made a decision for each. He then said that there were 431 parcels that were split, and after examining each one, Staff was proposing changing 369 of them.

He then drew the Planning Board's attention to two large maps and indicated that the first was the existing zoning map, and the second was proposed. Mr. Mix said that parcels highlighted with green and yellow diagonal hatching were the ones with split zoning. He said the green hatching identified parcels where Staff proposed eliminating split zoning and yellow hatching identified where split zoning would remain.

Mr. Mix then drew the Planning Board's attention to the areas on the map surrounding the Black River. He said that along the river, the Waterfront Zoning District has gaps, and that as Staff was obtaining information from property deeds, those gaps were being filled in. Mr. Mix then said that Staff proposed zoning the entire area surrounding the Black River as Waterfront.

Mr. Mix then drew the Planning Board's attention to a small number of areas at the edge of the City that had been annexed, but never zoned. He then said that Staff recommended taking this opportunity to fill those in.

Mr. Mix then addressed the parcels that Staff recommended leaving as split zoned. He said that generally speaking, the ones that would be left alone fell into one of two categories; that either they were large intrusions into another zoning district or they were areas that had been controversial in the past and Staff recommended leaving them alone because of that.

Mr. Mix said that he could take questions on any specific parcels that the Planning Board wished to discuss. He then said that if the Planning Board was satisfied, that Staff asked the Planning Board to recommend to City Council that the Council adopt the proposed new map as the Official Zoning Map of the City of Watertown.

Mr. Katzman asked if this new map will be on the City's online public GIS map once approved. Mr. Mix replied that he would let Matthew Owen, the City's GIS Coordinator, answer that question. Mr. Owen said that the zoning map that is publically available at this time is severely outdated. He added that Staff is trying to get it updated, but that the computing platform that it is based on does not even exist anymore.

Mr. Neddo then asked if any of the proposed zone changes would cause changes in assessed property values for parcel owners. Mr. Mix replied in the negative, and said that most of these parcels are already zoned in the majority for the proposed district anyway, and that this action would simply consist of completing the parcel.

Mr. Katzman then asked if Staff had spoken with any affected landowners for their opinions. Mr. Mix replied in the negative, and said that such an outreach would be a monumental undertaking. He said that it would involve thousands of letters. He added that in

the cases of zone changes, those letters were just a courtesy, and that they were not required by law. Mr. Mix then said that City Council agreed that in this instance, the City would not be doing that. He added that there would be a public hearing notice published, so it is not like this action is being kept secret.

Mr. Katzman then asked Mr. Mix if there was anyone he thought would get upset by any of the changes that Staff was recommending. Mr. Mix answered in the negative, and noted that Staff knew where the potential controversies were. Mr. Mix then said that one example was a parcel on Washington Street where a McDonald's restaurant had been proposed a few years prior and caused neighborhood pushback. Mr. Mix reiterated that these were the types of situations where Staff recommended leaving everything alone.

Ms. Capone then said that she found it surprising that Thompson Park was in a Residence A Zoning District. Mr. Mix replied that it was essentially irrelevant since that land was never going to be anything other than a park. He added that parks and golf courses are both allowed uses in a Residence A District. Mr. Mix then said that Thompson Park could always be rezoned to an Open Space and Recreation District, but that was a discussion for another day.

Mr. Katzman then moved to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed new official "Zoning Map of the City of Watertown, New York," that reflects changes to various zoning districts made to accommodate a new GIS-based parcel map and changes made to address various split-zone parcels throughout the City.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Fields and all voted in favor.

Mr. Neddo then moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fields and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 PM.